

Dear Mining Claimant:

If you drive a car, truck, all-terrain vehicle, or motorcycle on lands administered by the BLM or the Forest Service in Montana or parts of North and South Dakota, you can no longer drive cross-county without authorization; you must stay on existing roads and trails.

This new direction is outlined in the 2003 final environmental impact statement (EIS) which addresses off-highway vehicle (OHV) area designation on lands managed by the two agencies. The EIS is available online at www.mt.blm.gov.

Mining claimants are entitled to reasonable access and use of the surface to stake claims, perform assessment work, and conduct mechanized exploration and development under the appropriate mineral development regulations. Mineral activities that are generally considered to create minimal impact to the ground, such as claim staking or geologic mapping, are now subject to the following OHV requirements.

On BLM lands, typically no notification or approval is required for casual use (minimal impact) operations. However, any person operating a motorized wheeled vehicle on those areas designated as limited or restricted must conform to all terms and conditions of the applicable designation orders. Use of motorized wheeled vehicles to travel cross-country for casual use operations in areas limited or restricted requires permission by the authorized officer.

On National Forests and grasslands, no notification or approval by the Forest Service is required for operations which will be limited to the use of vehicles on existing public roads or roads used and maintained for National Forest/grassland purposes and that are open to the public. However, any mining claimant proposing to use a motorized wheeled vehicle in areas designated as limited or restricted must file a notice of intent or plan of operations and receive approval from the authorized officer prior to proceeding.

If you have any questions or comments, contact your local BLM or Forest Service office or Randy Heuscher, BLM, at (406) 896-5006 or Ray TeSoro, FS, at (406) 329-3523.